<u>IN THE CLAIMS</u>:

Please amend Claims 1, 2, 3, 5, 11 to 14, 16, 22 to 25, 33 to 36, 38 and 44 as shown below. The claims, as pending in the subject application, read as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An image processing method for an image processing apparatus, comprising the steps of:

inputting image data;

performing block selection of objects in the input image data;

discriminating whether each block of the input image data is character or non-character image data;

detecting a <u>color</u> ~~feature~~ of each block of character data without utilizing edge portions of the character data;

performing an image process on each block of the character data based on the detected ~~feature~~ <u>color</u> of the character data:[[,]] ~~and~~

performing an image process on the non-character image data; and

outputting the processed image data.

2. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the detected ~~feature~~ <u>color</u> of the character data is a foreground color of the character data.

3. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the detected ~~feature~~ <u>color</u> of the character data is a background color of the character data.

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4. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the image process performed on the non-character image data is a smoothing process, and wherein the image process performed on each block of the character data is an edge enhancement process.

5. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein a block selection algorithm performs the block selection and detects edge portions of the character data and utilizes portions of the character data internal to the edge portions in detecting the color feature of the character data.

6. (Original) A method according to Claim 1 further comprising performing color conversion processing of the image data before the outputting step.

7. (Original) A method according to Claim 2, wherein the foreground color detection process comprises:

converting input color component values of the character data to color space values;

determining an average color space value from the converted color space values; and

comparing the average color space value to a threshold value.

8. (Original) A method according to Claim 7, further comprising determining whether or not the character data is black based on a result of the comparing step.

9. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the input step comprises selecting a processing mode of the image data based on a type of image being input, wherein the discriminating step discriminates each block of the input image data based on the selected processing mode.

10. (Original) A method according to Claim 9, wherein the processing mode includes one of a text mode, a photo/illustration mode, a magazine mode and a mixed document mode.

11. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the character data comprises each of a plurality of characters of a word and the detecting step detects a ~~feature~~ color of each character in the word and compares the detected ~~feature~~ colro of each character with one another.

12. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus, comprising:

an input device for inputting image data; and

an image processing device that (a) performs block selection of objects in the input image data, (b) discriminates whether each block of the input image data is character or non-character image data, (c) detects a color ~~feature~~ of each block of the character data without utilizing edge portions of the character data, ~~and~~ (d) performs an image process on each block of the character data based on the detected ~~feature~~ color of the character data, and (e) performs an image process on the non-character image data; and

an output device that outputs the processed image data.

13. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to Claim 12, wherein the detected ~~feature~~ <u>color</u> of the character data is a foreground color of the character data.

14. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to Claim 12, wherein the detected ~~feature~~ <u>color</u> of the character data is a background color of the character data.

15. (Original) An apparatus according to Claim 12, wherein the image process performed on the non-character image data is a smoothing process, and wherein the image process performed on each block of the character data is an edge enhancement process.

16. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to Claim 12, wherein a block selection algorithm performs the block selection and detects edge portions of the character data and utilizes portions of the character data internal to the edge portions in detecting the ~~feature~~ <u>color</u> of the character data.

17. (Original) An apparatus according to Claim 12, wherein the image processing device further performs color conversion processing of the image data before the processed image data is output.

18. (Original) An apparatus according to Claim 13, wherein the foreground color detection process comprises:

converting input color component values of the character data to color space values;

determining an average color space value from the converted color space values; and

comparing the average color space value to a threshold value.

19. (Original) An apparatus according to Claim 18, further comprising determining whether or not the character data is black based on a result of the comparing step.

20. (Original) An apparatus according to Claim 12, wherein the input device comprises a mode selection device for selecting a processing mode of the image data based on a type of image being input, wherein the image processing device discriminates each block of the input image data based on the selected processing mode.

21. (Original) An apparatus according to Claim 20, wherein the processing mode includes one of a text mode, a photo/illustration mode, a magazine mode and a mixed document mode.

22. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to Claim 12, wherein the character data comprises each of a plurality of characters of a word and the detecting step detects a ~~feature~~ color of each character in the word and compares the detected ~~feature~~ color of each character with one another.

23. (Currently Amended) Computer-executable process steps for performing an image process, comprising the steps of:

inputting image data;

performing block selection of objects in the input image data;

discriminating whether each block of the input image data is character or non-character image data;

detecting a ~~feature~~ <u>color</u> of each block of the character data without utilizing edge portions of the character data;

performing an image process on each block of the character data based on the detected ~~feature~~ <u>color</u> of the character data<u>;</u>[[,]] ~~and~~

performing an image process on the non-character image data; and

outputting the processed image data.

24. (Currently Amended) Computer-executable process steps according to Claim 23, wherein the detected ~~feature~~ <u>color</u> of the character data is a foreground color of the character data.

25. (Currently Amended) Computer-executable process steps according to Claim 23, wherein the detected ~~feature~~ <u>color</u> of the character data is a background color of the character data.

26. (Original) Computer-executable process steps according to Claim 23, wherein the image process performed on the non-character image data is a smoothing

process, and wherein the image process performed on each block of the character data is an edge enhancement process.

27. (Original) Computer-executable process steps according to Claim 23, wherein a block selection algorithm performs the block selection and detects edge portions of the character data and utilizes portions of the character data internal to the edge portions in detecting the ~~feature~~ color of the character data.

28. (Original) Computer-executable process steps according to Claim 23 further comprising performing color conversion processing of the image.

29. (Original) Computer-executable process steps according to Claim 24, wherein the foreground color detection process comprises:

converting input color component values of the character data to color space values;

determining an average color space value from the converted color space values; and

comparing the average color space value to a threshold value.

30. (Original) Computer-executable process steps according to Claim 29, further comprising determining whether or not the character data is black based on a result of the comparing step.

31. (Original) Computer-executable process steps according to Claim 23, wherein the input step comprises selecting a processing mode of the image data based on a type of image being input, wherein the discriminating step discriminates each block of the input image data based on the selected processing mode.

32. (Original) Computer-executable process steps according to Claim 31, wherein the processing mode includes one of a text mode, a photo/illustration mode, a magazine mode and a mixed document mode.

33. (Currently Amended) Computer-executable process steps according to Claim 23, wherein the character data comprises each of a plurality of characters of a word and the detecting step detects a ~~feature~~ color of each character in the word and compares the detected ~~feature~~ color of each character with one another.

34. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium which stores computer-executable process steps for performing an image process, the executable process steps comprising:

inputting image data;

performing block selection of objects in the input image data;

discriminating whether each block of the input image data is character or non-character image data;

detecting a ~~feature~~ color of each block of the character data without utilizing edge portions of the character data;

performing an image process on each block of the character data based on the detected ~~feature~~ <u>color</u> of the character data:[[,]] ~~and~~

performing an image process on the non-character image data so as to output processed image data; and

outputting the processed image data.

35. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 34, wherein the detected ~~feature~~ <u>color</u> of the character data is a foreground color of the character data.

36. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 34, wherein the detected ~~feature~~ <u>color</u> of the character data is a background color of the character data.

37. (Original) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 34, wherein the image process performed on the non-character image data is a smoothing process, and wherein the image process performed on the character data is an edge enhancement process.

38. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 34, wherein a block selection algorithm performs the block selection and detects edge portions of the character data and utilizes portions of the character data internal to the edge portions in detecting the ~~feature~~ <u>color</u> of the character data.

39. (Original) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 34 further comprising performing color conversion processing of the image.

40. (Original) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 35, wherein the foreground color detection process comprises:

converting input color component values of the character data to color space values;

determining an average color space value from the converted color space values; and

comparing the average color space value to a threshold value.

41. (Original) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 40, further comprising determining whether or not the character data is black based on a result of the comparing step.

42. (Original) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 34, wherein the input step comprises selecting a processing mode of the image data based on a type of image being input, wherein the discriminating step discriminates each block of the input image data based on the selected processing mode.

43. (Original) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 42, wherein the processing mode includes one of a text mode, a photo/illustration mode, a magazine mode and a mixed document mode.

44. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 34, wherein the character data comprises each of a plurality of characters of a word and the detecting step detects a ~~feature~~ <u>color</u> of each character in the word and compares the detected ~~feature~~ <u>color</u> of each character with one another.